

MOUNTAIN RUNNING

Jan/Feb 2023 | ISSUE 01
RECAP OF 2022

Michael Postaski | Ultrarunner

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Wayne Rancourt - 10 Time Finisher
Idaho Mountain Trail Ultra Festival



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MOUNTAINRUNNING



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MOUNTAINRUNNING

Welcome to our Jan-Feb 2023 issue of Mountain Running Magazine! Please continue to submit articles, race reports, photos, humor, memes, results and etc to:

news@mountainrunningmag.com

We are kicking off 2023 with this issue being a FREE downloadable pdf. So please share!

~Subscribe to our newsletter and follow us on social media so you don't miss out on the announcements of chances to win free gear and other swag. Race directors, we would love to be a part of your running community. Contact us for sponsorship and donations to your event.

Please continue to submit stories to us so we can share with the world!

---See you in the mountains!
Lyn



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PUBLISHER & EDITOR
Lyn VanSchoiack

CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
Emily Hawgood

COLUMNISTS
Ian Corless, Jenn Maley,
Keith Wilson

CONTRIBUTORS
Michael Postaski,
Matt Whitehead, Jess Malone,
James Lauriello

CONTRIBUTING
PHOTOGRAPHERS

Ian Corless
iancorless.com

Lyn VanSchoiack

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IMTUF IDAHO MOUNTAIN TRAIL FESTIVAL 2022 MENS WINNER

Michael Postaski

“My favorite distance is definitely 100 miles (in the mountains). Something about having to run through the night is both exciting and intimidating at the same time. When you’re out there, carrying everything you need to get to the next aid station, usually by yourself, everything just feels more real.”

How did you get into running/mountain running?

I have to give full credit to my wife Christina for initially getting me into running. I did all kinds of sports growing up, but my brother and I primarily gravitated towards roller sports. I spent my entire youth and into adulthood playing roller hockey as well as inline speedskating (we actually started on quads way back in the day). When I met my wife in 2011, I was definitely one of those people saying how running was bad for your knees blah blah blah. She was regularly running for exercise and got me to join her a few times. One thing led to another, and I found myself running a few small races with her and even a half marathon in 2013. I had debilitating IT band inflammation after the race, since I obviously had no idea what I was doing.

Needless to say, I was hooked. From then on, I did the standard thing- running smaller road races, inevitably moving up to marathons, running Boston and NYC back when we were living in New Jersey. At that time, a French coworker of mine kept putting a bug in my ear about trail running. He knew I loved surfing and thought trail running had a similar ethos which I would like. Soon enough I found myself exploring some trails in New Jersey near my house, and I lined up for my very first trail race in 2017. I absolutely loved flying through the forest, the trees, with dirt and mud flying - again I was hooked.

After getting my feet wet with some East (Beast) Coast trail racing, we moved cross country to Boise in the fall of 2019. Aside from the lifestyle change, running-wise, I had never run in mountains before, so it was a big transition for me. I actually feel like it’s taken me the past 3 seasons out here in Idaho to finally start feeling comfortable with the terrain and even the climate. Beast Coast forests, rocks, roots, mud, and humidity is definitely a different animal! But it’s amazing being out west and having the opportunity to travel to all kinds of different places, and such a variety of terrain from mountains to desert to forests.

How does running inspire you?

Running, especially trail running, inspires me to get out there every day, enjoying nature and the outdoors. I love the free-form aspect of trail and mountain running. It’s not all about the clock. You can just go out on the trails, or into the mountains and run or train however you feel that day. You’re outside, you’re moving, everything is good, and everything is helpful even from a training standpoint. It also inspires me with curiosity to go to new places and see new things. What’s around that bend? If I climb up to that ridgeline, what can I see? Only one way to find out.

What is your favorite distance?

My favorite distance is definitely 100 miles (in the mountains). Something about having to run through the night is both exciting and intimidating at the same time. When you’re out there, carrying everything you need to get to the next aid station, usually by yourself, everything just feels more real. It’s an experience that I am grateful to be able to have, which feels all the more special because you can’t just “have it” - you have to work and prepare yourself for it. The physical, mental, and emotional aspects of a distance and duration like that are something that most people will never experience. We as trail/mountain/ultra-runners are very privileged that our sport inherently provides us with such amazing experiences.

What are your top 3 adventures you have enjoyed?

#1 My trip to Mt. Kilimanjaro in 2011 - I went alone, kind of on a whim, and that’s where my wife and I met. I did make it to the summit, but just barely - I was more or less propped up by the porters and borderline delirious on the way back down from the altitude. But puking on a rock in front of my future wife is always a good and funny story to tell.

 Jeremy Humphrey - Race Director

#2 Mountain Lakes Backyard Ultra - I'm calling this an adventure because it was a trail "race" unlike any others I've experienced. I tried my hand at this "backyard" style race back in 2019, completing 29 hours and 120+ miles. This was before I had run a 100 miler, so it was the farthest and longest I'd ever run before, as well as my first time running through the night. Aside from all those "firsts" for me, there's definitely something unique about running those 4.1666.. miles, having to answer the bell repeatedly, every hour, on the hour. It leans heavily into the mental aspect of ultra-running, and I do want to explore that realm again and try another one in the future.

#3 We did a full month family RV trip this past June throughout western Colorado. It was our first time in Colorado, first time spending such an extended amount of time in our travel trailer, and we had a blast. We visited too many National Parks, Monuments, Forests, and places and things to even list. Running-wise, I felt surprisingly comfortable at higher altitudes, regularly getting up to 10-11k feet and making my first 14er - Longs Peak. I've been scared to do higher altitude races since moving out here, but perhaps next year I can give it a shot.

Your favorite races?

Mountain races in Idaho! Out of my five 100 milers completed so far, 4 have been in Idaho - Palisades, IMTUF (2x), and Standhope. My first 100M back in 2019 was in Ruhpolding (Bavaria), Germany. Here in Idaho, I've also done River of No Return 108K, Scout Mountain 50M, Heavens Gate Marathon, plus all the wonderful local trail races here in the Boise area. I love the rugged and wild terrain that all those races offer - especially the 100 milers. None of them are "fast" courses, which I like. You have to be strong across multiple disciplines and be able to handle a wide variety of terrain and conditions in order to complete them - pure fast running, technical running, insanely steep grinding hikes, rough and rugged descents, a bit of altitude, mountain weather, heat, cold, all of it!

Other hobbies?

Running and family time tends to take up most of my spare time these days. But a previous love of mine was surfing. I spent one year of study abroad in Sydney, Australia, where I learned how to surf, basically spending all my spare time there trying to be a surf bum. Coming back home to New Jersey I stuck with it for a long time - doing the whole thing - 6mm hooded wetsuit, booties, lobster claw gloves, surfing through the winter even when there's snow on the beach. At that time, I couldn't imagine ever living somewhere far from the ocean, but now I feel the same way about the mountains. Another hobby which was a big part of my life back in New Jersey, which is probably more surprising, is salsa dancing. It was such a fun and diverse community that came together, all for the love of dance. I actually spent several years as part of a semi-pro dance group - performing regularly in shows, for cultural events, even traveling around the country and internationally for different events.

What gear and nutrition do you prefer when running?

I'm a bit of a gear junkie. I've been a regular contributor on RoadTrailRun.com over the past year plus - primarily doing shoe reviews, but also gear such as running vests, poles, and apparel. I run and race in gear and apparel from all brands, tending to stick to whatever is working best at the moment. My top shoe pick of 2022 so far is Hoka's Tecton X. I ran both Standhope 100M and IMTUF 100M in them, start to finish. It's an amazing long distance ultra-shoe, and more capable in mountainous terrain than I would have guessed before those races. Nutrition-wise, I've discovered and have been sticking with Precision Hydration products this year. I find their drink mixes especially effective, as they have more sodium and less sugar - it works for me and has allowed me to take in more fluids than I ever had before. Their gels also have a thicker, jelly-like consistency and neutral flavor, which I prefer over the typical more syrupy, flavored traditional gels.

Race Report of IMTUF

What were your overall thoughts of the race?

I had an amazing run out at IMTUF this year, probably my best performance to date in any long ultra. It felt like the first time I was able to put all the pieces together since I started trail running. It was my second time running the event. I ran previously in 2020 (the smoke year), and my plan that year was just to run it so I could get some experience under my belt. Palisades 100M that year had taken a lot out of me, and I still really had no idea what it took to run in the mountains.

Fast forward to this year, my 3rd year living in Idaho - I'm much more adapted to both the climate and terrain. I've also really worked on so many aspects of my running such as climbing, dialing in my gear situation, as well as fueling and hydration. I started out this year's race conservatively, not knowing what to expect. I remember in 2019 it was shocking to me to see so many runners go out so fast right from the gun. The DNF rate that year ended up being very high (52%). It seemed somewhat similar this year, with seemingly a lot of runners going out too hard too early. I believe I was somewhere around 15th at the top of Jug Mountain and might have dropped a few more spots on the steep descent down to Louie Lake.

I just focused on running my own race, not pushing it too early, and getting in and out of aid stations quickly. I started to move up a bit but didn't have any idea where I was for a long time, as it's hard to tell, especially with the commotion of the aid station stops. I was also running solo and didn't have any crew to pass along any information. By the time I left South Crestline aid station around M31, someone told me I was the first person to leave.

From then on it was just settling down and trying to cruise up to Upper Payette Lake, which was more or less the switchover from



the day to the night portion of the race. I carried a little timetable with me, so I knew I was way ahead of my checkpoints from 2020, but I had no idea where any other runner was. At Upper Payette Lake, I took some time to get all my night gear ready. I chatted with Jeremy a bit, and at the end I thought I heard him say he saw another runner may be coming in. I didn't think to ask any questions, and just took off right away.

I was able to get to Duck Lake without switching on my headlamp. The night was beautiful - a bright, full moon illuminating the forest and the walls of the surrounding valleys and mountains. A truly special experience to be out there alone, focused on the race, yet still trying to take everything in. I got to Lake Fork around M84, and that's where the race got serious. I had been pushing a bit since Upper Payette Lake, but still unsure if anyone was coming up behind me. I felt like I was running well, so I allowed myself to believe I was safe. As I sat at Lake Fork eating my second slice of pizza - the 2nd place runner arrived. I immediately threw down whatever I was eating and drinking, grabbed all of my stuff, and took off.

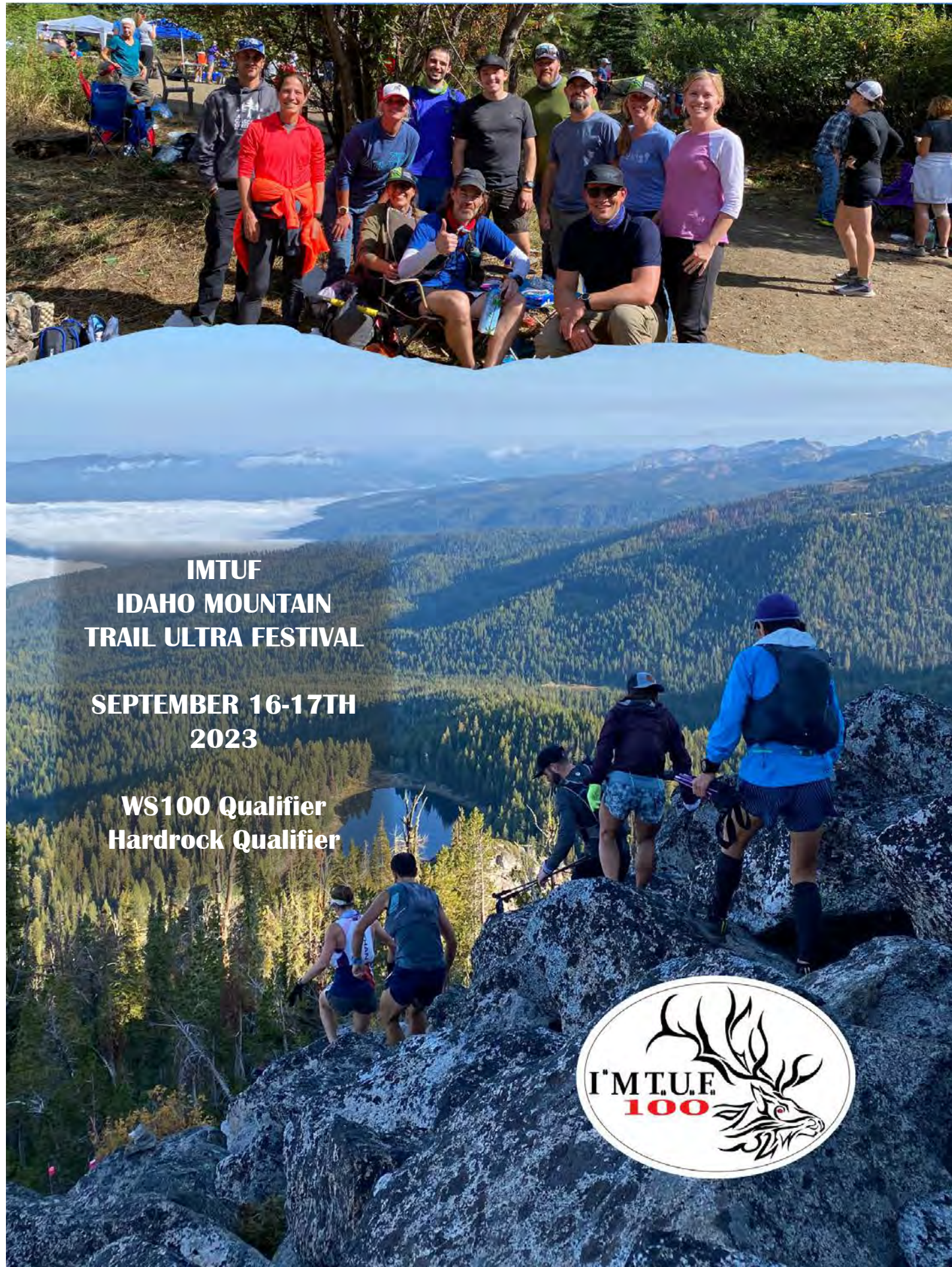
It's hard to describe the experience of the next 18 miles in the middle of the night. On one hand, I knew how these things tend to go - being in front, chased down and caught. It's a helpless feeling, as a certain momentum tends to build that can't be stopped. On the other hand - this was "IMTUF"! It held a certain mystique in my mind. When we decided to move over from New Jersey, as any good trail runner would do, I started looking up what kind of races were going on out in Idaho. IMTUF seemed like such a mystical and mysterious race, even the website with the black background seemed foreboding and menacing to me. I never imagined I would be running this race, in this way - me, in the lead, with 18 miles to go. I had allowed the thought of putting my name down on the list of winners of this crazy, insane, mysterious, menacing, mystical race to enter my head.

"Do you want it???" Race director Jeremy Humphrey asked me

as he led me into the final aid station - Boulder Lakes at 95 miles. I had seen and talked to him at several of the aid stations along the way - he was keeping tabs on the race, and this one last time making sure no one would get lost in the final stretch. "Yes" was my answer. I had grinded my way over the Snowslide summit - rewarded with a huge full moon rising up just as I crested the summit. I nearly went delirious on the long ascent up Boulder Mountain - stuffing myself with whatever calories I had to bring myself back to my senses. I seemingly crawled over that summit, then left no regard for my poor legs on the rugged, never-ending descent down from the clear and open summit into the black night.

All that was left was 6+ miles to the finish, to the end, to adding my name, improbably, to that list. I had been constantly checking over my shoulder for a while - even thinking I might have seen a flash of a headlamp once. But at this point, with all the big climbs behind me, there was no time for that. I gave a cursory glance now and then, but mostly focused on just moving forward and going as fast as I could force myself to go. Along the long straight dirt road next to Jug Creek Reservoir, I was able to get a long look behind me. Nothing but me, the cool night, moonlit water and the trees and mountains beyond. I knew I had it.

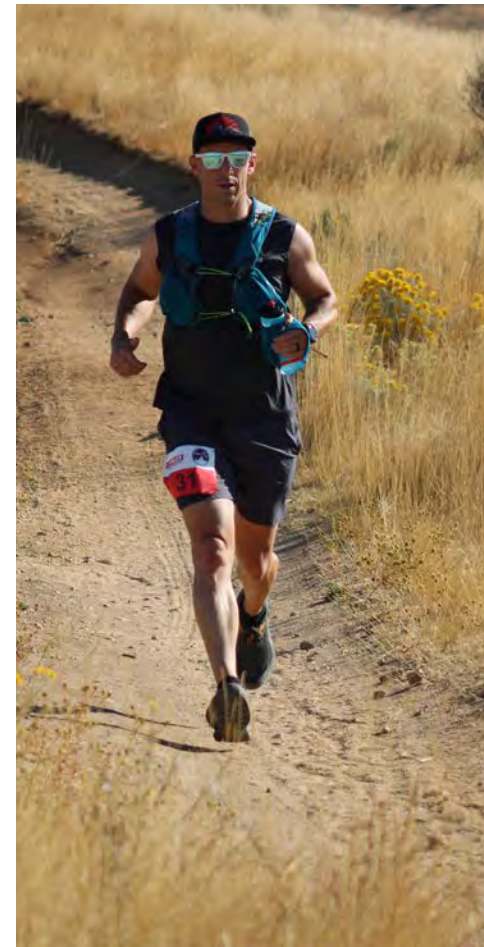
I crossed the line, in the dark of night, at 5:18 AM, finishing in 23:18. I never paid much attention to the time during the race, I knew I had some shot to be under 24 hours, but I was so in the moment that I never got to calculating as I usually do. It was the first time I had run one of these mountain 100s in that way. It's taken me some time to reflect and sit down and write all of this down. I don't really have anything else to say except thank you to my wife Nina for supporting me and letting me live out these crazy experiences. Thank you to Jeremy and Brandi and all of the volunteers who put on this event - this year, in years past, and in the future. You gave me one special day and night in the mountains of Idaho that will stay with me forever. Long live IMTUF!



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TRAIL ULTRA FESTIVAL**

**SEPTEMBER 16-17TH
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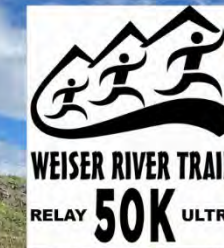
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Ultra Tour des 4 Massif

BY: Ian Corless

Ian Corless
PHOTOGRAPHER





©iancorless.com Day 1 Vercors



©iancorless.com Day 1 Vercors

Vercors, Taillefer, Belledonne and Chartreuse, the four Massif that makes up the challenge that is the Ut4M - Ultra Tour des 4 Massif. Based in and around Grenoble, France, just 1-hour from Lyon, the Ut4M is very unique in its grandeur and scale. Offering 12 races from 10 to 172 km which, fortunately, do not all take place on the same day. So, it's possible to make your own tailor-made multi-day experience. A staggering 90 combinations are possible.

THE RACES

The Ultra Tour (Ut4M 160) is a 172km journey, starting in Seyssins, the route a full and immersive 360-degree route, passing through all 4 Massif - **Vercors, Taillefer, Belledonne and Chartreuse**. It's a journey of mixed terrain and challenge. The early sections taking in Pic Saint Michel, Via and Uriol. Taillefer follows with the Pas de la Vache. Belledonne, some would say is the highlight section with majestic landscape, mountains, and lakes. The Col du Loup a highlight at 2400m. Chamechaude is the highest peak in the final Massif of the Chartreuse and while this area may be less beautiful and expansive as the massif that have gone before, the Bastille does welcome the runners before the arrival in Grenoble.

Make no mistake, this 172km with 11330m of vertical gain is a challenge and hardy undertaking only for the strongest mind, legs, and heart. But gladly, the Ut4M want to ensure that this

region and routes are available for all.

For those who like a multi-day challenge, the Ut4M 160 is available as a 4-day race, each day taking in one massif over roughly a marathon distance - the perfect stage race.

The Ut4M Master is a classic 100 km long distance (5930m+) that encourages trail runners to spend a night in the heart of the mountain! First, the Belledonne massif known for its steep trail and technicality. Then the Chartreuse massif with its dense forest.

Ut4M 80 begins with the Vercors massif with a long climb towards Moucherotte and descent towards Lans-en-Vercors. Pas de la Vache and then a vertical kilometre climb. The finish in the

Chartreuse massif passing by the St-Eynard fort offers an exceptional night view of Grenoble and its metropolis.

Ut4M 40 Series breaks down the Ut4M 160 route to 4-stages that may be taken individually or as mentioned previously, they can make up the Ut4M 160 as a 4-day stage race.

Ut4M 20 Series offers 4 races in the Vercors, Taillefer, Belledonne and Chartreuse - A perfect way to discover either part of a mountain range or a distance for novices in trail running. Each of these races allows different profiles: ascending or descending, day or night, rocky or single track.

Ut4M 10 starts and concludes in Grenoble. An event for anyone, young or old.

All the races use the Ut4M 160 and break the routes and massifs down into sections, it's possible to do as much or as little as possible, for example, you could do two Ut4M 40 and two Ut4M 20 - you decide! Or maybe just one race is enough?

“The Ultra Tour (Ut4M 160) is a 172km journey, starting in Seyssins, the route a full and immersive 360-degree route, passing through all

4 Massif - Vercors, Taillefer, Belledonne and Chartreuse.

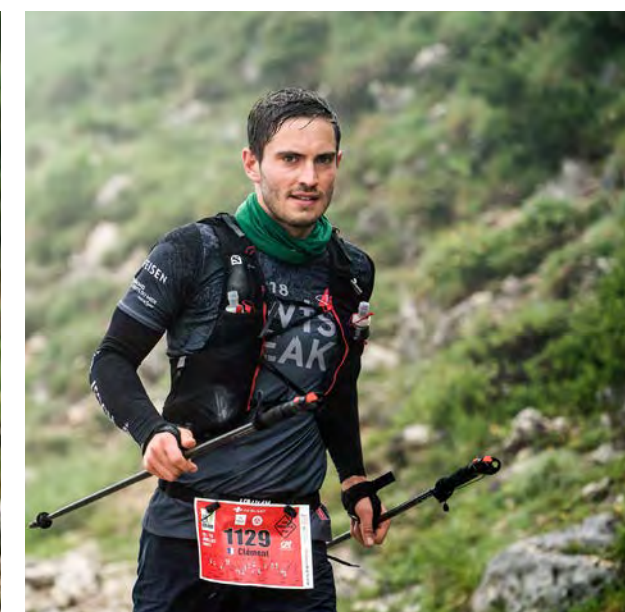
It's a journey of mixed terrain and challenge.”

THE MASSIF

Massif du Vercors is shared between the Northern Alps and the Southern Alps with a complex geography. Varied vegetation and climatic influences.

The Vercors "Four Mountains" designates the northern end of the massif and takes its name from the 4 historical communes of Villard de Lans, Lans en Vercors, Autrans and Méaudre. Today there is a tour of these 4 mountains sometimes called the T4M.

©iancorless.com Day 1 Vercors



THE MASSIF

Smallest of the 4 massifs, **Taillefer**, is geologically an extension of the Belledonne chain from which it is separated by the La Romanche valley, which gives it its membership of Oisans.

Dominated by the summit of Taillefer (2857m) the steep and wild mountains of the Taillefer chain provide exceptional walking routes from the bottom of the valleys to the ridges.

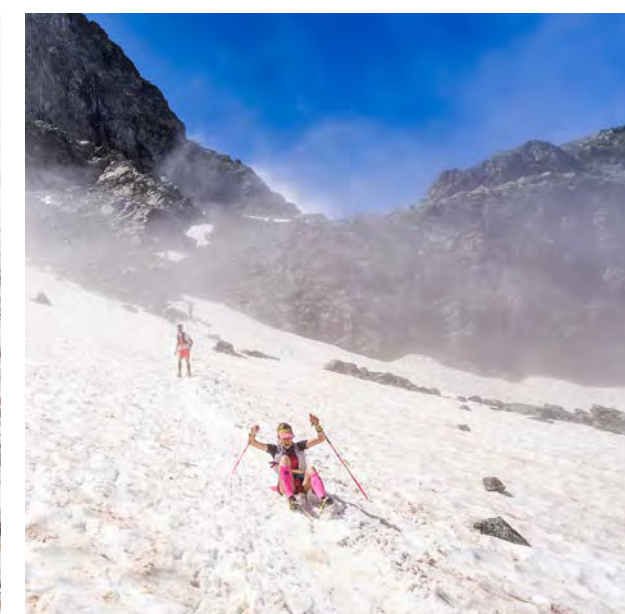
©iancorless.com Day 2 Taillefer



THE MASSIF

Made up of 54 mountains, **Belledonne** is the jewel in the massif crown. Characterized by its different floors, balcony floors, forest, mountain pastures and then summits. Through the beauty of its peaks, the tranquility of its alpine meadows, the purity of its crystalline waters, the majesty of its panoramas, the Belledonne range is a permanent invitation to calm and contemplation. Experience the Pra Refuge and the Col du Loup at 2400m.

©iancorless.com Day 3 Belledonne

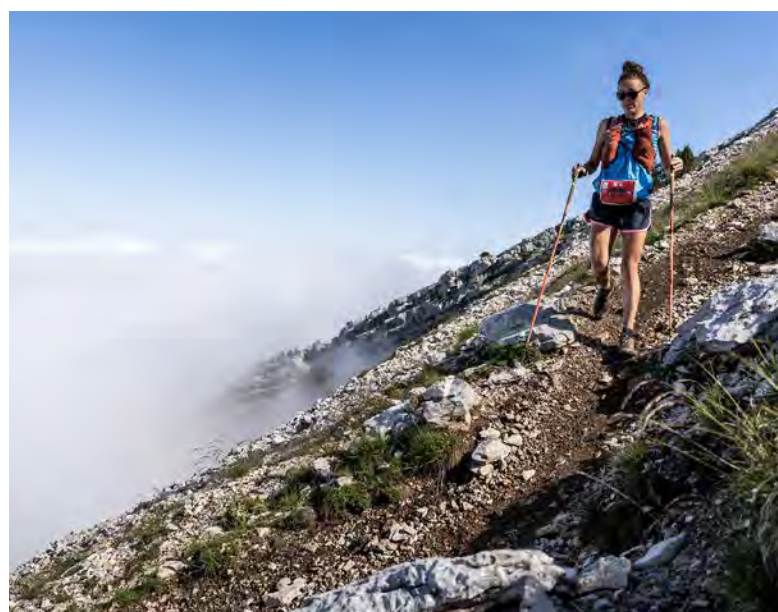
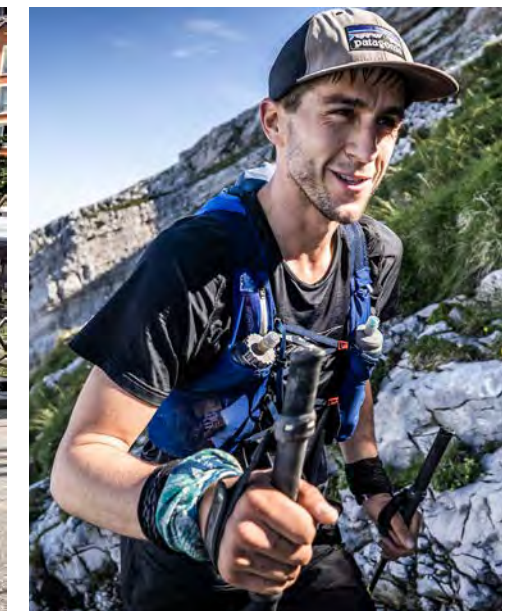


THE MASSIF

Chartreuse concludes the tour of the massif. Located between 200 and 2082 meters above sea level it is classified as a Regional National Park due to its natural and cultural heritage.

From the highest peaks to the valleys, Chartreuse offers a wide variety, the highlights being Chamechaude and the Fort du Saint-Eynard.

©iancorless.com Day 4 Chartreuse



Ultra Tour des 4 Massif

THE EXPERIENCE

Incredible organization, stunning scenery, four unique and challenging massif and the Ut4M experience has something for everyone. The possibilities are endless, and this is what brings runners back year-on-year.

Offering a perfect opportunity to sight see while running, Ut4M offers manageable distances for all, be that a stand-alone 20km or 40km race or the opportunity to string multiple races together of varying length - after all there are 90 possible combinations.

As in any mountain region, weather can play a huge part in the challenge. In 2021, the race was hit by strong winds and rain on day 1. It was so bad that sections of the trail were literally washed away. In the Belledonne, glorious sunshine greeted the runners with multiple snow fields and challenging terrain to be crossed.

Safety is essential as is self-awareness, the need to 'be prepared' is crucial. Many sections of the routes are wild, exposed, and inaccessible by vehicle. Of course, this is what helps make the region so magical.

If you are looking for an immersive experience, if you are looking for a varied and unique challenge, the Ut4M should be added to the bucket list - it's a magical experience.



Talk Ultra

Talking your legs off...!

RUN MOUNTAINS TO MASTER YOUR MIND

BY JENN MALEY

Did you know that cardiovascular exercise creates new brain cells and boosts brain performance?

More particularly, a need for speed often translates to being as sharp as a tack.

Running is alchemy, minimizing less desirable memories into echoes via the observance of less toxic rituals.

Running is fabulous for the mind but not all running is created equal...

Mountain running builds strength and stamina, burning fat at a more arduous pace via uneven terrain, on steeper grades. A mountain runner weighs more from muscle mass than a road runner but remains leaner.

Road running is better suited for speed... The scenery and biomechanics tend to be more monotonous via a harder surface. Pavement increases the likelihood of overuse injuries. Calories are burned in the form of glucose within the bloodstream, breaking the body down at a faster rate.

Both mountain running and road running increases bone density, given a proper nutrition plan.

If you're like me, you'll love mountain running... At a young age, I knew that as an adult, I would not resort to alcoholism, drugs, scapegoating, cynicism, drama, narcissism, or any toxic means of dealing with life's difficult issues.

Life is hard enough, why burn bridges I'd rather run across?

Running became my mojo early on... While other kids were sneaking out to get in trouble, I was sneaking out to go for a run.

In October of 2019, Jenny Valentish wrote an article for THE GUARDIAN, entitled "Runner's high: the well-trodden road of swapping drugs and alcohol for exercise." Within the article Valentish discusses a former cocaine addict turned ultramarathon runner and a, "gin-addled bookworm," who converted to marathon running.

Running isn't, "running away," instead an inspiring way of teach-



 @howiwestern.com

ing others to believe in miracles, be more productive and achieve audacious dreams.

In November of 2020, a scholarly article was published by the INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND PUBLIC HEALTH, stating that, "overall, studies suggest that running bouts of variable lengths and intensities, and running interventions can improve mood and mental health."

Studies prove running has the ability to minimize cortisol boosting stress, increasing the body's capacity to manage mental tension more efficiently through a bolstered supply of norepinephrine (a chemical that moderates the brain's response to stress)... What's not to like?

Furthermore, running reduces anxiety and depression. The increased blood flow to the brain during running is alchemy, improving reactions to negative and/or stressful situations.

The greatest news is that you don't have to win races, be the fastest in your age group, be sponsored or even enter races to experience the mind enhancing benefits achieved from running mountains... You don't even have to live in the mountains. If you don't live in the mountains, try running hills or stairs.

Turn to running, to lighten life's burden when things get heavy.

~ Jenn Maley

FLOW STATE

BY: KEITH WILSON

Running is simple. Put one foot in front of the other and repeat the pattern but do it fast enough to propel the body airborne between steps — but for some of us, it isn't simple enough to be called a sport or a hobby. It's an act of exploration and expression. It's an act of defiance against societal expectations to seek comfort and sedentarism. It's how we experience what the universe has to offer.

Runners like to be comfortable, too. I love comfort but running reminds me I am at odds with myself. I push through pain to experience pleasure. Running reminds me I am a citizen not just of a country but of a planet. It's just not a planet teeming with runners as I might hope.

With comfort keeping too many of us under a sedative hypnosis, few people understand running. They just see some weirdo in shorts gallivanting down the street, sweating and grunting. They don't recognize the meditative or rejuvenating effects. They don't acknowledge the act of tearing ourselves apart to seek the deepest parts of our souls. Some of us run because we are seeking something beyond running. I call it ultrarunning.

Ultra is a simple prefix, yet it says more than enough. In fact, it means more than enough. The literal translation is beyond in Latin, and it has become my favorite prefix. Sound can be ultrasonic, light can be ultraviolet, and Michelob can be ultralight. In tradition, the term ultrarunning is an abbreviated way of saying ultramarathon running, meaning running a race of a distance that is more than the standard 26.2 miles of a modern marathon.

Even what defines an ultramarathon is rooted in comfort. In the 1908 Olympics, Queen Alexandra wanted the marathon to finish where she could watch it from her balcony. If it had been another 4.8 miles away, a marathon would be a 50K. An ultramarathon would be anything longer.

To me, ultrarunning, as one compound word, isn't the mere act of running an ultramarathon. It's the act, as the prefix suggests, of reaching a place beyond running. Of course, to get there, I must run first.

The etymology of run takes us back to *ryne* of the Anglo-Saxons, which was synonymous with flow, like the current of a river or the change in the tide. The word later transformed into *rune*, which referred to any kind of course — such as a road, a path, a trail, or an expanse of mountainous terrain. It also could have been a circadian rhythm, an orbit, a month, or a week.

There's a place running takes me. Call it flow state, energized focus, or being in the zone. For me, running to that special place requires more than leaving a couch or a cushioned office chair and jogging down the street. For me, it requires going beyond the paved bike path. Life begins, as the aphorism goes, where the pavement ends — but it isn't this simple either. To get to that mode of Zen, one-with-with-the-universe, self-transcendence state-of-mind, I might have to run until I see stars, which either means the sun has gone down or I seriously need some electrolytes.

Either way, I must run for a while first. Either way reveals light from the infinite, almost distinguishing between the perceived world and what exists. It's as if the stars are there to remind us of our insignificance and our connectedness simultaneously. Whether or not I see stars, they're always there — and although I'm not Superman, the soles of my shoes assist in my futile attempt to defy gravity.

I wouldn't say that running makes sense of the unknown. Anyone who has stargazed for a long enough time knows that pondering the unknown overwhelms our comprehension. Mayans, Egyptians, and the people who built Stonehenge understood the patterns of astronomy as much, if not more, than modern leading minds on the subject — but did they know about quarks, electrons, black holes, and dark matter? Did they know anything beyond the observable universe, or were they just as clueless as me?

The universe is under no obligation, as Neil DeGrasse Tyson has put it, to make sense to us. Even the observable world around us remains with parts unknown. No human eye has seen some species of plants and

animals, just as there are unclimbed mountains and depths of the ocean unreached. Many of them will remain this way long after human beings have gone from this planet — so no, running does not always make sense of it, but it enables me to accept the chaos. It enables me to wipe the clutter clear.

Running provides perspective. When I run to the top of a mountain, I can look out over a landscape composed of buildings and streets, traffic and commerce, but it's in front of a backdrop of hills, trees, mountains, and sky. I can see houses next to other houses, owned by this person and that person. I can see public land and property owned by individuals, but no one claims ownership of everything. The school down there is just another building, and I am not enclosed by it.

Most people never reach this place. Many people fail to enjoy the sunrise, the sunset, or even the horizon, let alone go for a run down the street. If they do run, it's most often a chore to lose weight. Running is no different to them than liposuction, tapeworm capsules, or bottles of weight loss pills.

The sun illuminates our perceived world, but it does not enlighten everyone. To observe beyond the observable, I must run inward and outward as well as forward. Then I allow curiosity, observation, and creativity to flourish.

We can all interact with the ground and the sky without a meditation application. We can have such experiences in times of joy, sadness, prosperity, and despair. Whether or not we share in the experience, we are all part of it.

It's attainable at every moment of every day, and every state of mind exists within it, in the brightest sunrise and the darkest hour. I feel more alive than ever when I get there, and I embrace my surrounding space with ease. I jump across puddles, leap over fallen logs, and



charge up mountains, embracing playful spontaneity and seemingly endless energy.

This place is sacred, as if the perceived distance and the space beyond are one. They are one, and this truth is never more apparent as when I follow both logic and intuition. In this place, there is no shame or insecurity. There are no students flinging erasers at each other or making fart noises with their armpits (I'm a teacher).

With the soles of my shoes against the dirt, my lungs absorbing air as I float into the sky, my ego disappears. It's as though I don't exist — yet I am part of all of it, the eternal tide of expansion and contraction of the universe. It ebbs and floods through me as I ebb and flood through it. I am made of the same atoms as all the material of the universe.

Branches scratching my skin or sharp rocks beneath my soles are reminders that I have a body in physical space. Thoughts and emotions are not separate, but they are not the same either. The effort and energy it takes to run to this space resides in the beyond and in me. In our modern society, most people never make it here. As accessible and as beneficial as this state can be, I must never take it for granted. Like the stars, it is here, and I am here, too, whether or not I observe it — and to observe it, I first must run.



*Matt and his dog
Lucky*

Coach - Runner Spotlight Matt Whitehead

I have always been a runner, even winning my first race at 2 years old! I grew up playing lots of sports but running is what I loved best! I ran cross country and track from middle school through college, starting as a sprinter and transitioning to middle distance. After college I kept running recreationally as I got married, had three kids, and worked full time as a Posture Alignment Therapist at my company Oregon Exercise Therapy where I help people from around the world recover from injuries and get back to living pain free active lives. In the last 10 years as I've become more involved with the trail and ultra-community in Portland, I decided I have so much knowledge about anatomy, physiology, biomechanics, nutrition, and endurance training that I would start coaching to help others achieve their ultra-goals and dreams. I got certified as an Ultrarunning Coach with United Endurance Sports Coaching Academy and started Ultra Run Coaching.

What got you into running?

I have always loved running and did trail running in high school and college, but really fell in love with trail running after moving to Portland, Oregon after college. As a sprinter and middle-dis-

tance runner I never thought I'd be able to run further than a half marathon (the furthest I'd ever run). But my mom was a marathoner and I decided to try to run the Portland Marathon with her one year. I didn't know if I'd be able to build up to run 26 miles, but it went well, and I finished in my exact time goal! This got me wanting to run longer distances while also reminding me I hate roads and love trails. I discovered the love of ultras and especially long adventure runs after joining the Wyeast Wolfpack trail running group. I met some of my best friends through this group and we started doing longer and more challenging adventure runs and races together. We also started crewing for each other, working aid stations at races, and doing trail work - all of which really show you how awesome the ultra-trail family is.

Favorite races? Favorite distance and why?

I love trail running, but also mountain biking so my favorite races have been ones with beautiful scenery (like Sun Mountain 50k and Squamish 50k) but that also have great mountain biking I can do the day after the race!



*Matt running with Wyeast
(Mount Hood) behind him*



Running adventures?

I love a great running adventure, especially with friends! Rim-2rim2rim in the Grand Canyon is still one of my favorites because it is breathtakingly beautiful and challenging at the same time. Two near and dear to my heart are the Loowit trail around Mount Saint Helens (Loowit) and the Timberline Trail around Mount Hood (Wyeast) because they are in my backyard and fun to run in different seasons as you get a different experience each time.

What made you decide to start coaching?

I have always been really into the science and art of running and endurance exercise and am constantly sharing information with friends and decided to start an ultra-coaching business to help more people. I got certified as an Ultrarunning Coach with United Endurance Sports Coaching Academy and started Ultra Run Coaching.

Running goals, coaching goals?

My running goals are just about having fun on adventure runs either solo, with my dog Lucky, or with friends. I haven't had the chance to run the Wonderland Trail around Mount Rainier, but it is on my list for next year and will probably become a yearly tradition like the Loowit and Timberline trails have become. I'm also planning some multi day hut-to-hut trail runs in Italy and Switzerland next year that have been on my bucket list for several years (but Covid got in the way).



- 📷 Top Left: Matt and friends figuring out which way to run next
- 📷 Bottom Left: Matt and friends running a ultra loop through the Wallawas
- 📷 Top Right: Sunrise miles through wildflower fields
- 📷 Bottom Right: Matt at the high point of the Teton Crest Trail



My coaching goals are to help those athletes that have struggled with running injuries and show them that they can run pain free and achieve their goals - whether it's running UTMB or Western States or doing their first 50k. I also enjoy helping athletes figure out how to maximize their fitness through personalizing training to build on their strengths and minimize their weaknesses.

What recommendations do you give for new athletes wanting to get into ultrarunning?

First, be patient and enjoy the process. Building up to running a 50k or 100 miler takes time so be patient as your body learns to run longer and on steeper and more technical terrain. And don't get so caught up in the workouts, miles, or training plan that you lose sight of the fact that running should be fun! If you're not having fun on most of your runs, you're doing something wrong.

Second, find a trail running group if possible, to join so you can find running friends and learn from those more experienced than you. There is so much you can learn from those who have already done it and almost everyone will be more than willing to share.


Thirdly, find a coach you like and trust. Having a coach who knows how to guide you and your body to your goals while avoiding injury can be so helpful. A good coach will not just give you a training plan but will talk with you on a regular basis and evaluate your training and make adjustments frequently to keep you progressing towards peak fitness for your big event(s).

Other hobbies?

Mountain biking, road biking, gravel biking, nordic skiing, traveling, and playing and running with my dog.

Matt Whitehead
 Oregon Exercise Therapy LLC
www.oregonexercisetherapy.com
www.ultraruncoaching.com
 503-899-2821 cell





POLES IN TRAIL
& MOUNTAIN RUNNING

Ian Corless
PHOTOGRAPHER

Poles in Trail & Mountain Running

BY: IAN CORLESS

Poles, love them or hate them, have become increasingly popular in ultrarunning and mountain races. Considered 4-wheel drive, poles provide an incredible advantage, if used correctly, to help cover distance more efficiently. In long and arduous events such as UTMB, Tor des Geants, Hardrock 100 and so many more mountain races, poles have become the norm.

Used in France, Italy and Spain for some time. In recent years, runners in the USA have slowly but surely adapted and accepted them, particularly in mountainous events where groomed single-track is replaced with technical terrain and the need to climb many vertical kilometers.

The reality (for many) is that the longer we go the chances of walking increases. Equally, when in the mountains, walking is very much a key element of a successful day training or racing. So, it is important to train specifically to become fast, effective and efficient.

Nordic Walking (“Sauvakävely”) was first introduced in Finland in the 80’s to help boost the nations declining health. As you can expect, its roots are founded from skiing and it was formally defined in a book called “Hiihdon lajiosa” by Mauri Repo. This book dates back to 1979. Poles used in the early days were in one piece and the technique was used as off-season ski-training. Nordic Walking is a sport in its own right and the technique, and compared to regular walking, involves applying force to the poles with each stride, it provides a more ‘all over’ body workout - triceps, biceps, shoulders, abdominals, chest, core and so on gets a workout. This is why as a runner; you MUST train and adapt to using poles.

In recent years, companies like Black Diamond and Leki have specifically created poles based around the needs and demands of runners. Original Nordic Walking Poles were of fixed length but now telescopic and more importantly, folding poles exist which provides far greater flexibility, particularly if poles are not required for longer periods.

Folding poles (in general) fold in three sections and provide a fixed length pole, it’s important to purchase the correct length pole.

What length pole do I need and what type?

Walking poles are shorter than cross-country ski poles and as a rule you want a well-balanced pole that is elbow height. I say as a rule as this can vary depending on your intended use. As a starting point, elbow height is a good place to begin. Another method

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©iancorless.com Luis Alberto Hernando



is multiplying your height in cm by .68 and then rounding this down to the nearest 5cm. However, variables come in to play. For example, if you were 172cm tall, pole length would be 115cm.

Variables:

1. As you get used to poles and as technique improves, work on cadence and rhythm. If using poles mainly on the flat, often a slightly longer pole may be preferable.
2. For trail and mountain running, stick with bent elbow pole height and use the equation multiplying your height in cm by .68 and then rounding this down to the nearest 5cm for a pole length start point.
3. If you are doing just VK’s (Vertical Kilometre) a shorter pole is often preferable.

*Some poles, the Black Diamond Distance Carbon FLZ a prime example offers the ability to adjust, marginally up and marginally down.

©iancorless.com Kaytly Gerbin



This can be a good option for those who regularly mix disciplines or for those who like to change pole lengths. However, this adjustment comes with a weight penalty.

Cheap poles are just not up to the job and you want a pole you can rely on that is stiff, strong, light and reliable you need to pay for it. In the long run, it works out cheaper, Black Diamond and Leki are arguably the two standout brands in the trail and mountain running world. As an example, the Black Diamond Distance Poles in 115cm length weigh a remarkable 186g for a pair.

The hand grip section is also a key consideration. Handles are typically slim and designed not to interfere with the wrist action when snapping the pole through at the end of the push through phase. A strap will be attached to the handle and this should be close, comfortable and provide a snug fit so that the recovery phase is easy. Many straps are a loop that you slide your hand into, however, companies like Leki provide a glove like system that clips in and out of the pole using a trigger system. The glove system works exceptionally well, but can make for complications, particularly in colder weather when you may need thicker gloves and/ or mitts.

The Technique.

Legs, body and arms need to work together as one in a rhythmic motion to gain the most from using poles. The range of arm movement regulates the length of the stride, this is why pole length is key. However, this does vary when climbing particularly



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on steeper and technical terrain as a shorter pole may well be better. For runners, our demands are different to a pure Nordic Walker as we may run with poles for added stability and security, at times we may be striding out on flat terrain and then we may well be climbing or descending.

It's ok to mix techniques when using poles, climbing you will more than likely grip the handle firmly and use the pole as leverage ahead of you and from behind, you will push away from the pole. Other occasions, you will have a very light touch, and not even gripping the handle which allows the pole to move freely, only connected to the body via the hand strap. In general, poles should not go in-front of you as this makes a brake. Poles, in general, should always be behind you so that you can PUSH forward. Pole technique is in time with your stride and the greater benefits come when getting in a rhythm. You can use single pole forward or double pole forward technique. Many often switch between the two, especially when climbing, but on the flat single pole forward is best.

Severity and technicality of terrain will dictate what technique you use. The PUSH phase is obviously still incredibly important if moving quickly.

Other considerations:

Added stability on technical terrain such as water crossings. Downhill stability if used correctly, but you need to make sure you do not trip yourself.

Relieve stress on quads and knees when climbing and descending, especially in longer races.

Aid balance.

Provide an opportunity to get into a rhythm and therefore move faster, especially when walking.

Do poles give an advantage?

Poles used to be called cheating sticks and in some circles they still are. Do they give an advantage? I actually don't think it is easy to give a clear and definitive answer on this... If you have the technique and know how to use them, yes, poles provide an advantage. You can see this in any big mountain ultra, UTMB and example, everyone uses poles.

Luis Alberto Hernando for example uses poles all the time when racing. His technique is superb and when you watch him on a climb he is like a machine. However, he wouldn't use poles on the flat as he is able to run. For him, they are purely a means for climbing faster.

In skyrunning, poles are used regularly when allowed and the cross over from ski mountaineering is clear to see. However, Kilian Jornet for example very rarely uses poles even though he is a ski mountaineering world champion.

Therefore, your choice and decision to use poles must be assessed base on your need and demands.



©iancorless.com Dmitry Mityaev TDS

©iancorless.com Rondane 100



You will only be faster with poles if you know how to use them.

Any disadvantages?

Yes, for sure. Go to UTMB when the trails are full of thousands of runners and poles are going in all directions. You can lose an eye for sure.

Poles occupy your hands so simple tasks like feeding, map reading and so on can be labored.

You cannot use hand bottles and therefore you need a pack that carries bottles, or you use a bladder.

Downhill they can be a real trip hazard if not used correctly.

Without correct technique, you can actually waste more energy.

You need to spend time and learn how to use them.

Conclusion:

Finally, please remember that some races do not allow poles. So, make sure you train with and without. Don't become reliant on them. Learning to walk efficiently is a key attribute in ultra and mountain races, the ability to climb with hands-on-knees is a great skill to hone, but given a choice, poles make the job easier for little additional weight.

Interesting fact based on data to balance the pros and cons:

NOTABLE REFERENCE: Howatson et al. Sci Sports Exerc 2011; 43: 140-5

37 volunteers made the ascent and descent of Mount Snowdon with a day pack having either poles or no poles. The group having poles had significantly less rating of perceived exertion (RPE) during the ascent, showed attenuation of reductions in maximal voluntary contraction immediately after and 24 and 48 h after the trek, delayed onset muscle soreness (DOMS) was significantly lower at 24 and 48 h after the trek, and creatinine kinase (CK) was also lower at 24 h after the trek.



©iancorless.com Abelone in Norway



A person wearing a blue jacket and a backpack stands on a rocky outcrop in the foreground, looking out over a vast mountain valley. In the middle ground, a vibrant turquoise lake is nestled in a valley. The background is dominated by massive, rugged mountains with patches of snow and a clear blue sky with scattered clouds.

Playing In The Alaska Mountains

JESS MALONE



Bagging Bird Ridge

PLAYING IN THE ALASKA MOUNTAINS

BY: JESS MALONE

Hi! My name is Jess Malone, I am 44 years old. I have been married to my amazing spouse, Brian for 22 years. We have two fun to be around, independent teenage boys. We have been able to call Alaska home for over 12 years.

How did you get into running/mountain running?

I have always said that I am not a runner (insert giggling), but the mountains have drawn me in, and I am falling in love with trail running. I really like to call myself a jack of all trades, because I love almost any athletic outdoor adventure! I love to hike, bike, downhill ski, cross country ski, trail run, backpack, and back-country ski. Being out in nature and cross training is what keeps me content and filled with gratitude. The thing I love specifically about running is that I can easily get a good workout in in a relatively short period of time; that makes it really convenient.

How does running inspire you?

Nature and being outside is what drives me to run! Pushing and working my body makes me feel alive!

My current inspiration is my 17-year-old son and his girlfriend. The girlfriend talked my son into doing his first race ever. This summer they will be participating in the Anchorage Mayor's Half Marathon, and I get to join them! They have inspired me to start a real training plan, using my husband's expertise as a physical therapist, I have started a running specific strength training plan along with gradually increasing my distance.

What is your favorite distance?

It depends! If I am in the mountains, I can stay all day!

What are your top 3 adventures you have enjoyed?

Just yesterday I fat tire biked 25 miles out to an amazing glacier! Everything about the day was perfection, so it has to go on my top three. Going on adventures like that fills my soul. Biking to that particular glacier was a new experience for me and I really appreciate the thrill of new places.



Bagging Harp

Another top 3 that comes to mind was taking a 3-day avalanche backcountry downhill ski course this winter. I gained so much knowledge in a short period of time while enjoying the mountains. And this is my first winter ever skinning up a mountain. Earning my turns was a blast!

I am so blessed to live in Alaska because our mountain access is the BEST. I find myself bagging peaks weekly and every time it grounds me and charges me up all at the same time! Constant peak bagging has to be on my top 3 list.

Tell us how you got into skiing mountains?

I started downhill skiing when I was five years old, but I grew up in South Dakota, so it was just an annual ski trip until we moved to Alaska.

Your favorite races?

My favorite race was actually a winter fat bike race called the Icy River Rampage! This summer I am signed up to compete in my first ever mountain race called Veins of Gold out in Hatcher Pass. It is 9 miles with 5,000 ft of elevation gain. I have never done anything like this before, so I am very nervous and excited all rolled into one.

Other hobbies?

I love exploring new outdoor places! I love facing my fears (grizzly bears and avalanches) and seeing myself grow stronger. I love spending time with my family, especially when we are camping, skiing (well they all snowboard) or traveling together.





The Injured Runner

BY: IAN CORLESS

 @iancorless.com All Photos

Humans are designed to move, there is no question about it and moving by putting one foot ahead of the other is a rewarding exercise that can be done anywhere at any time. Walking in itself, is an essential part of day-to-day life as it allows us just to function and get around. Running, allows us to cover more ground quickly and it is here that we progress to exploring, racing and seeking to improve.

Improving in anything requires training, you need to train to be a doctor, you need to train to be an artist and in sport, no matter what sport, training is required to improve and progress. By definition, ****Training allows the body to gradually build up strength and endurance, improve skill levels and build motivation, ambition and confidence. Training also allows athletes to gain more knowledge of their sport as well as enabling them to learn about the importance of having a healthy mind and body.

In running, it has often been said, there are three types of runner:

- The runner recovering from injury.
- The runner that is injured.
- The runner that is about to be injured.

The above is a pessimistic look at a runner, but there is some truth. You see, runners get injured because our bodies are only capable of so many miles or hours. Push too much, too hard, too often and the body breaks.

Training in itself is designed to stress the body so that it adapts. The body breaks down on a cellular level (bone cells and networks of cells deform) with long-running, fast-running, climbing, descending, whatever it may be specific to your chosen discipline. The magic happens when we rest. So, the first lesson is to embrace rest. Rest is not a dirty word; rest is essential to make the training stimulus work. Push too far, too long, too fast and the body breaks and we get injured.

****Experts recommend training is varied and tailored to specific individual needs; this helps keep motivation and establish individual goals. Athletes should take care to rest fully between training sessions; this will help to prevent overtraining, which can have negative effects on performance and contribute to injuries... Sessions should not be too easy or too demanding; they should be pitched at the appropriate level to facilitate improvement but prevent injury and a lack of self-confidence.

Finding the balance is hard. The stress v rest equation is a tough one and many find the run/rest balance difficult. Sometimes, less is more! You see, running, and most sports in all honesty are addictive. *****‘Sports addiction sounds paradoxical, because we

usually reserve the word ‘addiction’ for things that are recognizably bad for us, such as illicit-drug use or alcoholism, but there really is a sense in which you can become addicted to exercise. Even modest athletes can relate to the famous ‘high’ after exercising, triggered by the release of ‘happiness hormones’ such as dopamine and endorphins, which have mood-altering effects.’

It makes sense, just as a drug addict needs a fix of ‘x’, we as runners need a run to get that kick off endorphins. When we don’t run, we get low, our mood changes and well, we can be a little difficult to be around. But let’s be clear, the positive and psychological effects of an active lifestyle are proven. Improved fitness, stronger heart, better weight management, increased life expectancy, clearer mind, stronger bones and the list goes on. But like in all things, irrespective of ability, runners need balance.

If you are new to running, the balance will be different to the experienced runner who is maybe looking to run a personal best.



One thing is common though, all training places stress on the body.

A novice run week may look like below:

- Monday - 30 min walk
- Tuesday - Rest
- Wednesday - 30 min alternating between 5min walk/ 5 min jog
- Thursday - Rest
- Friday - Gym working on strength and core
- Saturday - 30min walk
- Sunday - 45 min broken down as 5min walk/ 10 min run and repeat

By contrast, an experienced runner looking to break, say, 3-hours in a marathon, may have a week that looks like the following:

- Monday - 40 min easy run at 90 secs per mile slower than MP
- Tuesday - 50 min run as 10 min easy, 30min at Marathon Pace, 10 min cool down
- Wednesday - 90 min endurance run, 1min slower per mile than MP
- Thursday - 15min war up, hill reps 10 x 2min efforts (85%) on 90 sec recovery, 15 min cool down
- Friday - Rest
- Saturday - Park Run of fast 5km.
- Sunday - 2hr 15min run as 90min 1min per mile slower than MP, then 30min at MP followed by 15 min easy to cool down

There is a huge difference between the training plans above. Each applies stress in its own way, and both require rest or easier days to allow the body the strength to train hard when required.

So, planning is key in a training plan. Most runners, but not all, require a rest day in every week. If not rest, easier days to allow adaptation. A good strategy, that works for many, is to break months down, building for 3-weeks and dropping down on week 4 with easier training and more recovery. So, 8-weeks training in hours (just for illustration) could look like the following:

- Week 1: 6 hours
- Week 2: 8 hours
- Week 3: 10 hours
- Week 4: 6 hours
- Week 5: 8 hours
- Week 6: 10 hours
- Week 7: 12 hours
- Week 8: 6 hours

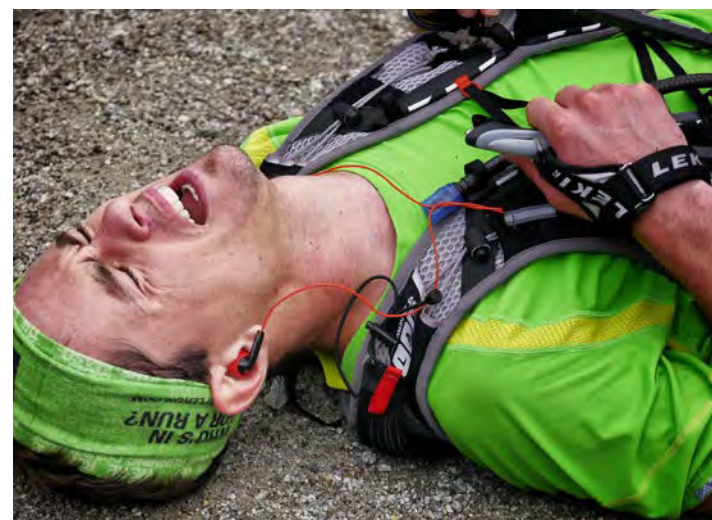
If a runner never gets injured, one could arguably say that they fall in one of two categories:



1. They have a superb training plan that balances stress, stimulus and rest.
2. They are not training hard enough and not adding any stress. Some coaches actually say that injury is just part of the process and we need to be prepared for it. In a way, I agree, but that does not mean we just try to avoid injury at all costs.

NSMI**** provide the following information to avoid injury:

- Warm Up
- Use the correct equipment (in our scenario, appropriate footwear)
- Use the correct technique (run style and gym/ weight training)
- Do not over-reach (Listen to your body, know your limits)
- Remain hydrated
- Cool down



The above is a simple bullet list of points that provides a great starting point. But running is a harsh sport that creates great impact and stress, so, maybe we can be a little more creative.

Diet - Food is fuel and it provides us with energy to undertake training and importantly it allows us to recover. So, think about the food you eat and consume good quality calories from a variety of sources.

Cross-Train - Just because you are a runner, you don't need to run every day. In all honesty, a good cross-training regimen is essential in my opinion to keep the body healthy and the mind healthy. One or two sessions per week in a gym on a Stepper, Elliptical Trainer or Rowing Machine all increases fitness and gives the 'running' body a break.

Weight training, core training and yoga are all positives to running.

Treatments - Having a massage every week or every month is a great way to have an overhaul of the body. It's like taking your car to the garage to make sure that everything is working okay... A good sports therapist seen on a regular basis is a great



WHAT IF YOU GET INJURED?

way of nipping potential niggles before they become injuries.

Get a coach - A good coach will take into consideration your targets, available time, family and life stresses and provide you with a plan that balances stress and rest. In addition, they are a sounding board for your concerns, and they will keep you honest. They will push you when you need it, and they will tell you to rest.

Variety - Don't always run on the same routes. Mix up terrain so that it provides not only physical stimulus but mental stimulus. However, don't lose sight of the reason why you are running. For example, if your target is a road marathon, you need specific road training. Equally, if you are running a trail 100-miler with loads of vertical, don't do too much running on the road.

The secret is noticing injury early and doing something about it. Runners are historically bad at this. Understanding what was is training discomfort (stress) and an injury waiting to happen is crucial. Simply. When in doubt, do not run. RICE has often been used as an option in the 24/48-hour window:

- **Rest** - At least 48 hours of rest for the injured area
- **Ice** - Apply ice packs to the affected area for period of between 10 and 30 minutes. Be sure to place a towel over the injured area before applying the ice pack as direct contact with the skin can cause an ice burn.
- **Compression** - In order to reduce swelling and also to restrict movement, compression bandages can be used.
- **Elevation** - By raising the injured limb to a comfortable and elevated position, swelling can be reduced, and the limb will be at full rest.



As mentioned above, having a coach or getting regular treatment will help here, as you have at least two avenues to explore.

But shit happens and that 'one extra run' or not listening to your body is when the scales tip over and injury occurs.

See a professional. Don't guess, do not go on social media and ask your peers what is wrong. Pick up the phone, get an appointment and start on the right path to a healthy body from the beginning.

There is no one type of injury and of course some injuries can be resolved in a week with some RnR and treatment, whilst others may see you sidelined for week, or months.



This is where cross-training in a training plan may well have been a god send. Remember we said early on, runners (all sports people) are addicted to an endorphin kick; we are addicts. So, while you may not be able to do the thing that you really, really want to do. Doing something is always better than nothing! Cross training is almost always given by a sports professional to help you on the road to recovery, so, embrace it.

Rest. Yes, if you have not already realised it. Rest is one of the key disciplines of any training plan. Embrace the rest days.

As an injury progresses and heals, be sensible. The urge to rush out the door and pick up where you left off is not a good idea. Ease the body back in, start slow, be progressive. Add stress, rest a great deal and slowly but surely increase time on feet and avoid any hard sessions. Once the body starts to feel good again, you can start to introduce other training stimulus such as speed and hill work.

Naturally, prevention is better than cure and there are many things that should be advised to professional and amateur athletes alike in order to avoid chronic muscle pain and injuries. Proper alimentation and stretching can be key? A diet rich in proteins, vitamin C and A, and zinc, will help rejuvenate muscle tissues and prevent any damage and long-term injury. Making sure enough calories are consumed on a daily basis is also crucial to help maintain the body's ability to repair itself. Perhaps also counterintuitively, the athlete also has to consume enough fat: an optimal level of fat has been proven to help reduce the inflammation process.

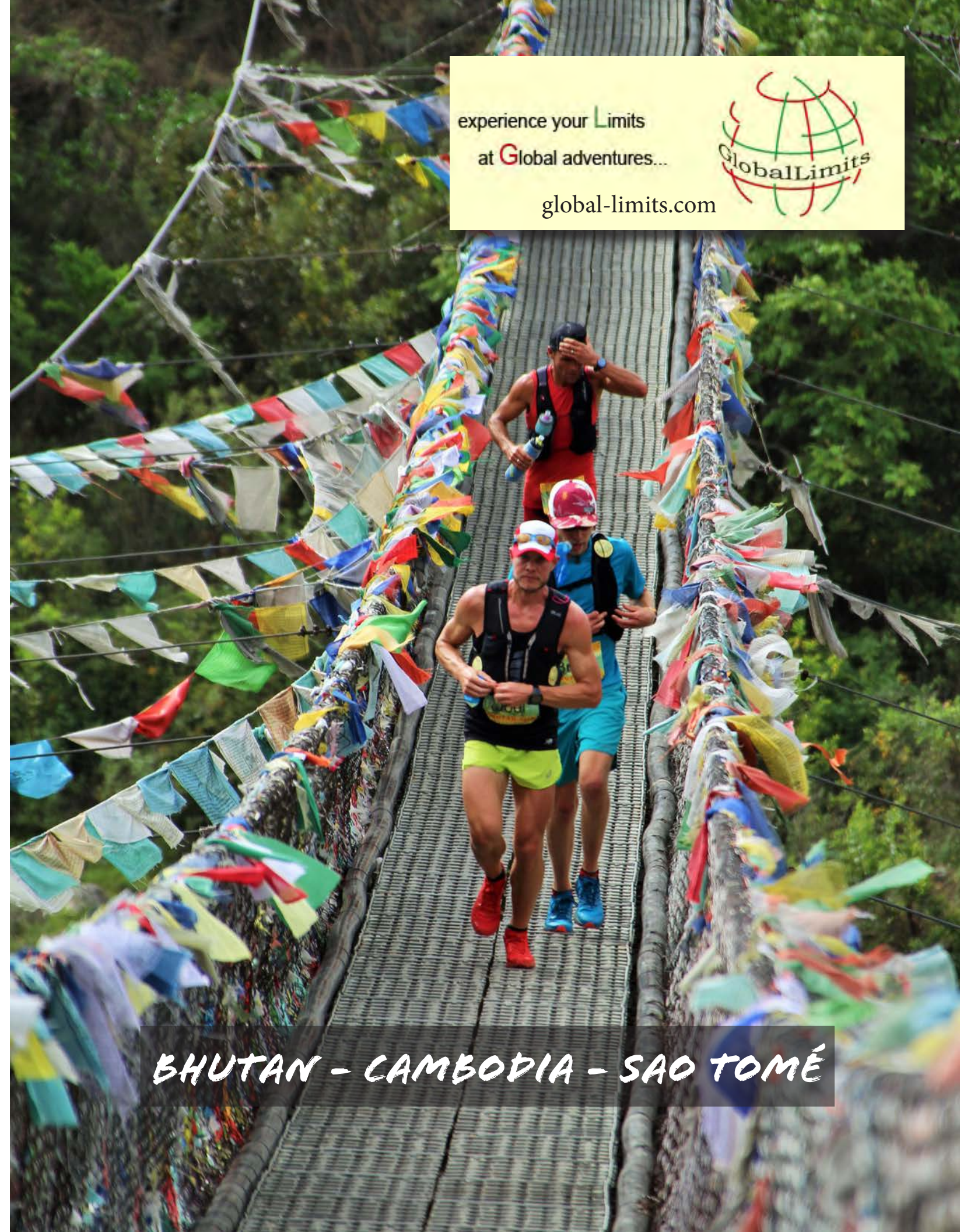
Finally, it is recommended to eat post workout as it has been demonstrated that muscle tissue heals faster during a sub 2 hour-window time frame. Stretching exercises are equally recommended by sports specialists in order to help increase flexibility and avoid muscle sprains. Dynamic warm-up stretches in particular serve to increase body temperature and prep the body to perform each activity.*****

Finally, learn from the process. Sit down and look at the training that led to the injury. Try to see markers or key points that you can pinpoint and then moving forward, plan accordingly.

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Ian Corless
PHOTOGRAPHER



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**Adventures in
The Sangre De Cristo Mountain Range
in Southern Colorado**

Trail & Ultra Running Adventures in the Sangre De Cristo Mountain Range in Southern Colorado

BY: James Lauriello

Surrealistic Sangre – Part 1.

A late September adventure amongst the aspen leaves of South Colony Lakes, a beautiful cirque nestled in Colorado's Sangre De Cristo Mountain's at the foot of the iconic Crestone Needle.

I always felt a deep connection to the Sangre De Cristo Mountain Range. Just a short drive from my home in Colorado Springs,



this range is uniquely different. Sporting a topographical contrast comparable to Colorado's San Juan Range, its vertical, sawtooth peaks have a way of making you feel insignificant.

You may be familiar with a few of its peaks: The Crestone Needle & Crestone Peak, Kit Carson & Challenger Point, Blanca & Little Bear and so many others make up this jagged skyline that divides the San Luis and Wet Mountain Valleys and extends south-south-eastward along the Rio Grande Rift about 250 miles from North-Central New Mexico through South-Central Colorado.

For the Crestone circuit above South Colony Lakes, my enamor runs deep. It could be that this was the first group of 14ers I had ever explored, or perhaps because this was the same mountain range of my first ultramarathon years prior. One notable memory includes a 2020 vision quest in late fall, which resulted in a failed summit bid on Humboldt Peak, less than 15 hours after running my first 50K. Regardless the reason, the explorer in me brings me back to these peaks year after year, always excited to experience this remote and jagged landscape.

Gazing upon the Crestone Needle transports you out of Colorado and into an alpine environment comparable to the Italian Dolomites where the steep, jagged peaks contrast significantly from other alpine environments found in Colorado. Autumn here is special; the Aspen leaves are a unique mix of aureolin and lime that line the forests as far as the eye can see.



The last weekend of September, I once again set out to the Sangre De Cristo range to participate in the Sangre De Cristo Ultra's for the 3rd year in a row (more on that in part 2). The week following, I found myself and several friends heading back to enjoy the last few fleeting moments of early fall before the mountains receive their first snowy frosting of the season.

We set out to explore the lower South Colony Lakes and Broken Hand Pass, which sit in a basin shadowed by Humboldt Peak to the North, The Crestone Needle to Southwest and Marble Mountain, a 13er, to the South. A personal motivation for this trip was to scout several 13ers in the same area for potential late-season FKT attempts. The route to get to this location is an old rocky 4-wheel drive fire road known as, South Colony Road. The road has two trailhead locations for the upper and lower access point parking lots. My group and I parked at the lower trailhead and proceeded to make our way up the road. The route from the lower trailhead to our projected turnaround point near Broken Hand Pass was about 7.5 miles one way, 15 miles round trip with about 4,400-ft of elevation gain and a high point around 12,800-ft.

The route snakes its way from the forested lower valley up the basin, thick aspen groves changing to Engelmann Spruce to an alpine tundra on the ascent. From the beginning of our journey, the abundance of wildlife is obvious. Not long into our effort we came across a small herd of bighorn sheep, and moments later we heard a male elk bugling in the distance. Outside of the abundant beauty and wildlife, the middle miles of this road are rather mundane. It isn't until you reach the old South Colony Lakes Trailhead, about 6 miles up, that the route splits off and begins to open to reveal

the massive peaks on all sides. From here, the road fractures into two single-track trails: one which goes to the upper South Colony Lake and eventually turns into the summer route for Humboldt Peak, and the other to Lower South Colony Lake, which leads to Broken Hand Pass and the subsequent routes for the Crestone Needle & Crestone Peak. We chose the south route to experience the Lower Lake and explore Broken Hand Pass.



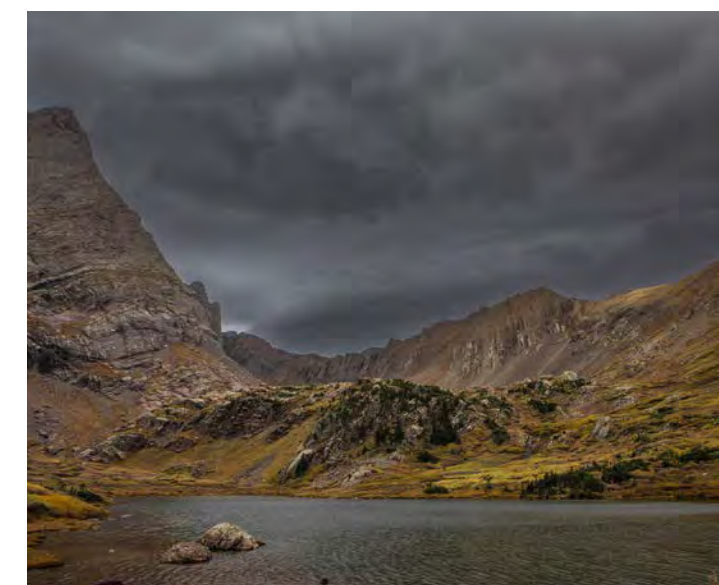
Beyond the split, the route winds its way up several hundred feet, under the shadow of the 13er, Broken Hand Peak where we then enter the Sangre De Cristo Wilderness and get our first glance upon this mountain, each time is unique. At points, there was inclement weather, while warm sunshine at others. Some years, the peaks have already been capped in snow, yet this year they remained barren.

These mountains are unpredictable; however, one thing is certain: they were here long before we arrived, and they will remain long after we're gone. I am always left in such wonder as to what Albert Ellingwood and Eleanor Davis experienced back in 1916 when they touched the summit for the first time.



After an extended period of photography with the needle and backdrop, we made our way to Lower South Colony Lake, which was about 7 miles into our route and what would later become our turnaround point. Lower South Colony Lake sits just above 12,000-ft, right at the line where the Engelmann Spruce trees begin their final fade into alpine tundra. There are a myriad of footpaths and game trails leading to and around the lake below the pass, none of which are very direct and are densely packed with thickets of subalpine mountain willows.

As we made our way to the lake, we noticed it was gin clear and appeared to be packed extensively with large cutthroat and other trout species. While we planned to gain more elevation to experience more of Broken Hand Pass and to scout some 13er lines, we ultimately decided to turn around at the lake as the first substantial high peak snow of the season had started moving in shortly after noon. We began our 7-mile descent with light snow and rain with temperatures ranging in the low 30's to 40's.



It was the perfect end to our autumn alpine adventure, yet it wasn't over. Remember I mentioned a 7-mile descent of South Colony Road? This road has some semi-technical downhill running, with mostly some large, loose stones. With about two miles left into our descent, the rain became significantly heavier, and my group and I had reached peak boredom with the views behind us. Even my dogs were over it.

As we descended, we came across another recreator – a man from Westcliffe who, at the ripe age of 74, had crushed Humboldt Peak that very morning- solo & in jeans. He kindly offered us a lift in the bed of his Ford Ranger down South Colony Road. One would think that having been on this road many times, I would have had the awareness that South Colony Road is notoriously sketchy and rocky (especially having just run up it that morning), and probably one of the most difficult roads to access in the entire range. However, without hesitation, my group and I agreed to a lift. For the next two miles, my heart rate was the highest it had been on the entire adventure; it was the roller-coaster ride that builds character. Bump after bump eventually led to a heart racing moment where the truck was nearly up on one side with the feeling that it was about to roll over. Fortunately, as fast as that experience began, it was over, and we had arrived back to the lower parking lot.



being in the first wave. That confidence would soon come back to bite me, as my reality on race day was a slice of humble pie. I hung in with the leaders, and even led the race at points, until mile 22. At this point, I found myself being passed by numerous runners as I bonked, and my momentum became a crawl on the second climb up Music Pass. I wanted to DNF. But I didn't, mostly because there are no aid stations on Music Pass to quit at. I can remember finishing the race with literal tears of joy having just had my legs destroyed by the near 7500-ft of vertical gain.

The 50K course is a special one, you begin with an initial climb of 2300-ft up Music Pass and descend to an out-and-back on the iconic Sangre De Cristo Rainbow Trail, turning around at South Colony and finishing with one final out-and-back up Music Pass. The views are stunning to say the least.



I finished the race happy; it was my first-time spending time with my "tribe" and getting to experience the camaraderie that comes from doing difficult things in the mountains with complete strangers. I made friends I still have today at that race and left with so many incredible lessons to build upon. For me, it was just the beginning.

I returned to race the Sangre De Cristo Ultras in 2021. This time, I was a newly minted Coloradan. I was a little wiser, and a little more experienced and for the first time, I tasted the tiniest modicum of running success. I began finding my way. I realized the ultra-distances weren't necessarily my "thing" and that sub-ultra-mountain running seemed to compliment my strengths well. I returned to the Sangre that year to race the 27K, a race that was an important test for me, as one of my mountain-running heroes, Timmy Parr, had set the course record here in 2019 at the U.S. Skyrunning Series.

As was in 2020, my intention was to make it on the podium. However, unlike 2020, I showed up prepared. I had previewed the course multiple times in the weeks leading up to the race to make sure I knew what to expect. Rather than race along the Rainbow Trail, the 27K consists of a double ascent/descent of Music Pass, topping out just shy of 12,000-ft twice, with one aid station at the start/finish line. The other crux of the route is that the race begins at 9am, as opposed to the earlier start times of the other races.

Late September in the Sangre is a roll of the dice. Some years, it's

40 degrees at the start, and others it's already reaching well into the 60's. 2021 was a warm year. The race started out to my expectation, with myself and another runner, Matt Wheeler, pulling away in the beginning mile. He and I duked it out twice up and down Music Pass and I was able to successfully take the lead and the win on the descent in the final miles. Overall, it was far from pretty; I couldn't believe I just won the race, but I was a little disappointed with my uphill running. I was hungry to improve in the off-season.

My dust-up with the Sangre De Cristo Ultra almost didn't happen in 2022; I had new goals and race objectives. It wasn't until I returned from a trip to Silverton, CO in late July that my plans changed. I came back with a bad case of Covid that sidetracked most of my August running. And sure, while I might have been patient, I was really scared that I might not get back to being the runner I was. It was difficult to comprehend that the fitness that I worked so hard for over the last few years could be taken away on a whim. It was a sign to me, introspectively, that I had given running a place in my life that it should never have, and that I needed to take a step back and start enjoying it for what it was: a gateway to adventure, and the unknown, and not an obsession with competition and Strava crowns.

After recovering from Covid, I searched for healing, not only physically but mentally. I cleared my race calendar in August and most of September. I ventured out to the Pacific Northwest and started testing myself again - first with an unsupported-solo circumnavigation of Mount Saint Helens on the Loowit Trail. When I returned from Washington, I knew it was time to race again and that something in me had changed. This time I was racing for a different reason, and that was to get the best out of myself. With limited races on the late September calendar, it all came full circle on which race I would choose: The Sangre De Cristo Ultras.



The race director had recently introduced a 14K distance which included one lap up and down Music Pass. A full description of the course would be to call it a steep-graded, rocky fire road that eventually turns to single track and snakes its way just below 12,000-ft, through the San Isabel National Forest, ending at the barrier between The Sangre De Cristo Wilderness and Great Sand Dunes National Park. The high point of the race is stunning, & the backdrop includes views of a cirque of 13ers that include Music & Marble Mountains as well as Milwaukie Peak. Music Pass broke my race in 2020 and just barely made it in 2021. It was a hurdle to me I just never got quite right the last two years. My competitive goal strayed from winning, and I decided to show up with the intention to give my best effort on the day and to PR my time. I decided to race the old versions of myself from '20 and '21 to see how far I've really come. Most of all, I was just excited to enjoy a grassroots event with my tribe.

The night before, I was calm, relaxed and slept well, something I never do before a race. I awoke on a chilly late September morning in sleepy Westcliffe, CO and made my way south to the Music Meadows trailhead. Enroute on highway 69, I passed under the shadow of the iconic jagged spires of the Crestone Needle, poking their way around Marble Mountain. I arrived at the trailhead prepared to go to the depths of my soul, and so I did.

Unlike previous years where I would have broken into a power hike, I ran every step of the 4 mile / 2300-ft ascent to a 7-minute PR on the ascent alone, good enough for a first-place finish, and the CR / standard. I was happy to face those past versions of myself and to explore just how much growth I've experienced in these last three years. A journey with this race that I would never have expected.

Unknown to those on the outside is the pain staking preparation trying to claw my fitness back. The long hours spent running laps up and down Longs Ranch Road in Colorado Springs until I puked, the rolled ankles, the hill reps, the pep talks from my coach, the constant excuses I gave my day job so I could sneak away from work to get in mid-day workouts, and the studying and re-studying of the course until I knew every rock, root and fallen tree. It all came together in the Sangre in a surreal way.

I'm not sure where this leaves me in my journey with this race and these mountains. I do, however, plan to come back as the lessons I've learned have led to immense personal growth and exploration. I think that's the point of these races; The Sangre De Cristo Ultras carry a grassroots vibe, capturing an aesthetic that's rough around the edges. To me, in an era where races like these are quickly disappearing to the UTMB and The Golden Trail Series, these races have a smaller, community feel and therefore serve an important purpose in our constantly evolving sport. The courses are burly and tough and designed to challenge you. The people are kind and encouraging. They push you to succeed. To me, that's what trail and mountain running is all about.

We were lucky enough to experience the last few moments of autumn before the peaks received their first substantial snow. The changing of the seasons in the Colorado high peaks is something everyone should experience at least once. There is no better opportunity to be present in the mountains and to enjoy your family and friends.

Surrealistic Sangre. Part 2. My reflections and three-year journey with the Sangre De Cristo Ultras.



I am no stranger to these mountains. However, the second I lay eyes on the Crestone Needle from Highway 69, I find myself feeling a deep sense of intimidation and enamor all at once. Each year, for the last three years, I find myself at the Sangre De Cristo Mountains to race, returning a little wiser and with a new mantra.

2020 was my first trip to the Sangre and my first ultramarathon. I was a wide-eyed ultra wannabe and flatlander from Florida, with no real racing experience and all the confidence in the world. My intention was to podium the Sangre De Cristo Ultras 50K, a race that, at the time, was a member of the U.S. Skyrunning Series and takes place about 8,500-ft higher than where I was living.

Due to Covid many races were cancelled, but John, the RD at the Human Potential Running Series, held a safe race at the Sangre De Cristo Ultras. Because it was one of the few mountain ultras being held in early fall, the race attracted a ton of competition. I remember being so angry that I was placed on the second wave start, even though I had no results to my name and no business

Marathon des Sables 2022

BY: Ian Corless



Ian Corless
PHOTOGRAPHER

REFLECTING ON MDS 2022

BY: Ian Corless

 @iancorless.com All Photos

The 2022 and 36th edition of the Marathon des Sables concluded in the iconic Merzouga dunes (Erg Chebbi) on April 1st. Coming just 5-months after the 2021 race, re-scheduled from April 2021 to October due to the ongoing complications with the Coronavirus pandemic, the two races could not have been more different.

October 2021 was plagued by a norovirus that debilitated many of the staff and runner's, also, some of the most sustained and intensive heat that the race has experienced. It was a perfect storm that resulted in nearly 50% not completing the race.

The 36th edition by contrast was the opposite, only confirming that extreme endurance challenges can bring anything and being prepared, and adapting is key and integral to successful completion. Starting in March, a cooler MDS was anticipated, and this is what we got.

Early evening, nights and mornings were cool, and some would say cold, requiring additional layers and the use of a down jacket became essential for many, if not all participants. For those who raced too light, evenings were a somewhat miserable affair that wasted valuable energy trying to remain warm instead of recovering.

Daytime temperatures were on average mid 20's, at least 20-degrees cooler than those experienced in 2021. One particular day did see a 10-degree rise in temperature in just 1-hour, even then,

the temperatures never came close to 40-degrees. However, the race was marked by two days of storms that saw wind increase from early morning and become stronger as the day progressed bringing with it harsh and brutal sandstorms. Day 2 in particular was very tough and on this day, over 60-participants did not complete the stage - A high number in any year!

Despite the storms, and occasional rain shower that appeared a couple of times on the 'long day,' the 2022 edition may well have had some of the cooler and easiest weather conditions that the MDS has ever experienced. Coming after October, that was no doubt a welcome contrast.

From an organizational standpoint, the race was slick, streamlined and a pleasure to experience. No doubt some lessons were learnt in October and changes were made. With those lessons, those changes, the 2022 race gained praise from staff and runners. The mood was one of joy, positivity, laughter. Throughout the race and post-race three comments could be heard everywhere: 'Best experience of my life... Super organization... Faultless...'

From a racing perspective, 801 people completed the race with a dropout rate of 11% (tbc) - exact figures were confirmed in the coming days. Notably, over 50-people did not make the start line due to positive PCR checks in the 48-hour before departure for Morocco, a cruel blow coming so close to the race.

Covid and the pandemic was not a consideration during the race.



Spot tracker for each runner





Rachid El Morabity



Aziz Yachou



Anna Comet Pascua

As with all races we have winners and as per usual, the 2022 race was eagerly anticipated with Rachid El Morabity going for his 9th victory and the potential of Aziz Yachou spoiling his winning streak. One thing was clear to me pre-race was Rachid looked more toned, a little lighter and focused.

On day 1, Rachid attacked from the start, he never does this, he always comes from behind and takes victory. This to me only confirmed that he feared Aziz and he wanted to set his stall out from the start. He won day 1 from the front but only by a slender margin. He had a race on his hands...

From day 2 a strategy came in to play that was fascinating to watch and experience. Rachid, with his brother formulated a plan to fool Aziz that Rachid was not in the best shape. On stage 2 and 3 Rachid once again attacked from the front but on both days, he gave up his lead and lost time. Aziz was positioned to lead the

race and defend and by the time the 'long day' came, Rachid was in 3rd with 9-minutes to gain.

Come the long day, Rachid stamped his authority and put the plan in to action. By 10km he had 2-minutes lead, 4-minutes at 20km, 6-minutes at 30km and at 50-km he had 10-minutes - Rachid had gained the deficit and taken the race lead on the trail. By the finish he had gained almost 15-minutes on Aziz, a stunning and impressive run that was off-the-scale.

However, the tactics did not stop there. Behind, Mohamed marked Aziz all the way to 50km, noticing Aziz starting to slow, he made his move clawing back the 4-minutes he needed and at the finish line, he was crowned overall leader of the race with his brother, Rachid 37-seconds back.

Anticipation was high for the final marathon stage, would

Mohamed win? Of course not! This plan had been formulated from day 2 and quite simply, Rachid and Mohamed would police Aziz on the last day and as the stage came to conclusion, Mohamed would slow allowing his brother to gain the required time and in the process his 9th victory. It was a masterpiece of tactics that worked perfectly. It was a pleasure to experience.

The women's race was far less dramatic with Anna Comet Pascua winning each stage with a superlative performance of domination. Stage 1 started slowly as Anna eased in the race, but as the stages progressed, the Spanish runner felt comfortable and continually opened gaps to win by a convincing margin and place very close to the top-10 on general classification.

Sylvaine Cussot from France was always a contender and throughout the week ran a strong and consistent race, her 2nd place was one that was never in doubt, however, the gap to Anna

was far too great for victory ever to be a possibility.

Azia Elmandary represented Morocco along with the 2021 female champion, Aziza Raji. Although not in 3rd place in the early part of the race, her consistency shone through and by the conclusion of the race her podium slot was secured ahead of her fellow Moroccan.

Outside of the top-3 in each category, there was countless excellent performances with Merile Robert once again showing his experience in the race, the return of Julien Chorier and the rise of the American, Jordan Tropf who ran a stunning race for 5th. Patrick Kennedy (Ireland) placed 7th in 2021 and once again achieved a top-10 with 9th in 2022. A notable mention goes to Jay Batchen the US agent for the MDS who once again returned to the Sahara for his 15th finish.



Berbere and Camel



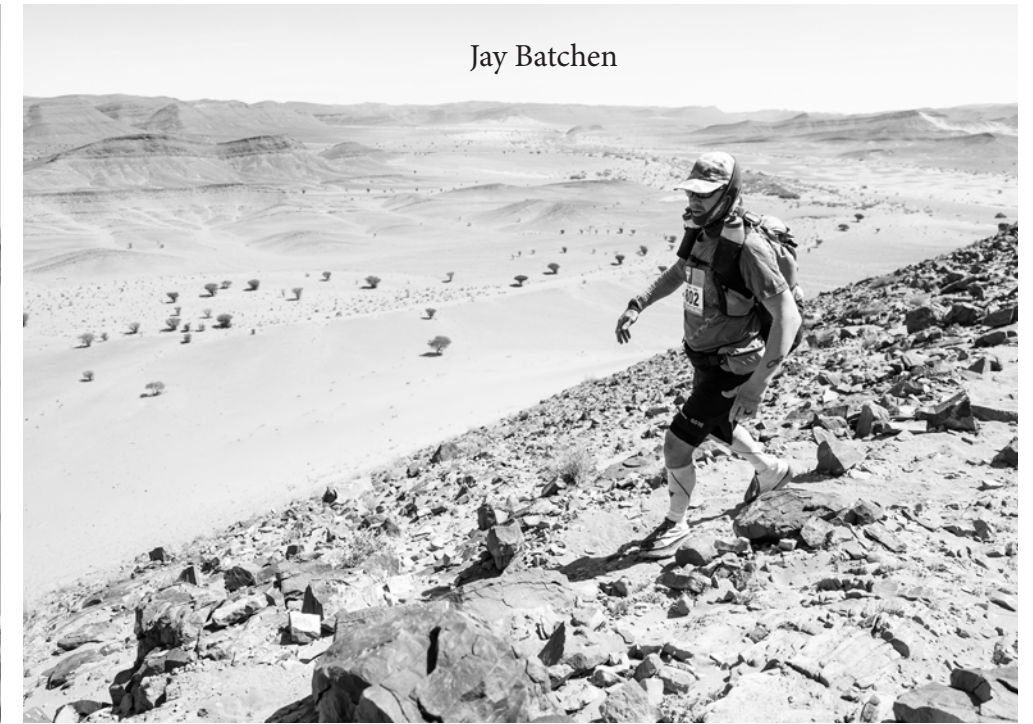
Julien Corier



Jordan Trops



Jay Batchen



“ While the weather conditions at the 2022 MDS were not the most extreme I’ve seen over my 15 years of participating, the sustained winds on Stages 2 & 3 were absolutely brutal and made for an above average year on the difficulty scale. That said, I think we were lucky to escape record high temperatures like those in 2021. As always, the volunteers and medical team provided unparalleled support throughout the race and the course was stunningly beautiful. Finishing this race, no matter where one places, is always special.” ~Jay Batchen

For the women, Aziza Raji will no doubt be disappointed with 4th after victory in 2021. Beth Rainbow and Amelia Culshaw from the UK both had top-10 placings, Beth placing 6th - a great result. We also saw the return of multi MDS champion, Laurence Klein who ran a solid race despite contracting Covid in the final build up to the race. From a US perspective, Lindsey Ullrich placed 11th who went on to say:

“This might be one of the best weeks of my racing life, if not the best. It’s been an absolute roller coaster of emotions; success, pain, friendship, hardship, support, love plus many others.” ~ Lindsey Ulrich

All Marathon des Sables are memorable. There is never a dull race. 2022 will be remembered for the stunning men’s race and the tactics used to ensure a 9th victory for Rachid. It was a masterpiece to see unfold and one that required supreme mental and physical confidence from Rachid. It’s all very well formulating a plan, pulling it off is the game changer! Imagine going in to an 85km stage with a 9-minute deficit knowing that you need to pull that back and in addition gain more time to provide a buffer so that victory can be secured! It was stunning. It’s important to mention the dedication, skill and ability of Mohamed El Morabity, he sacrifices personal glory for the greater good of his brother. It’s pointless asking the question, ‘Could Mohamed win the race?’ The simple answer is, as long as Rachid is in with a chance of a 10th and maybe 11th victory, no.

Anna Comet Pascua confirmed her ability as a versatile and adaptable runner. Known for trail, mountain and skyrunning with a victory at the multi-stage Everest Trail Race, her MDS victory confirms her as one of the top female trail runners in the world. Sylvaine Cussot has also confirmed herself as a one-to-watch for the future, I have this feeling she will be back at MDS very soon.

The 2022 route is arguably one of the most beautiful, last used in 2018. It has variety, stunning views, ridges, climbs, soft sand, two crossings of Jebel Oufal, salt flats and oasis. The long day, while not the longest (92km in 2009) is significant with an abundance of soft sand.

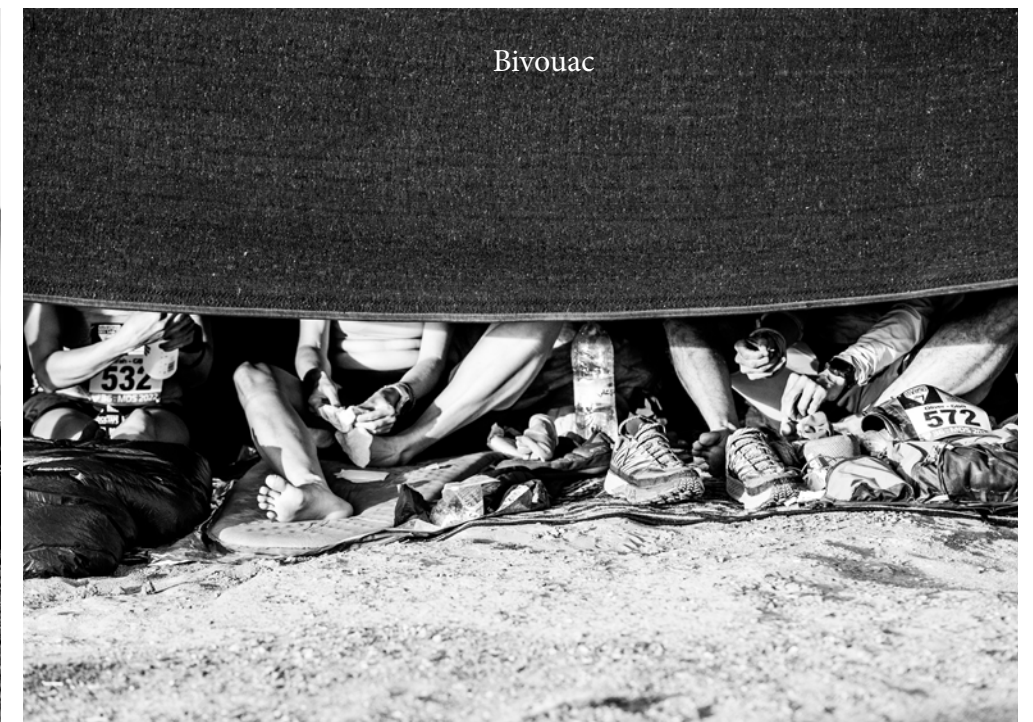
Lindsey Ullrich



Waking up in Bivouac



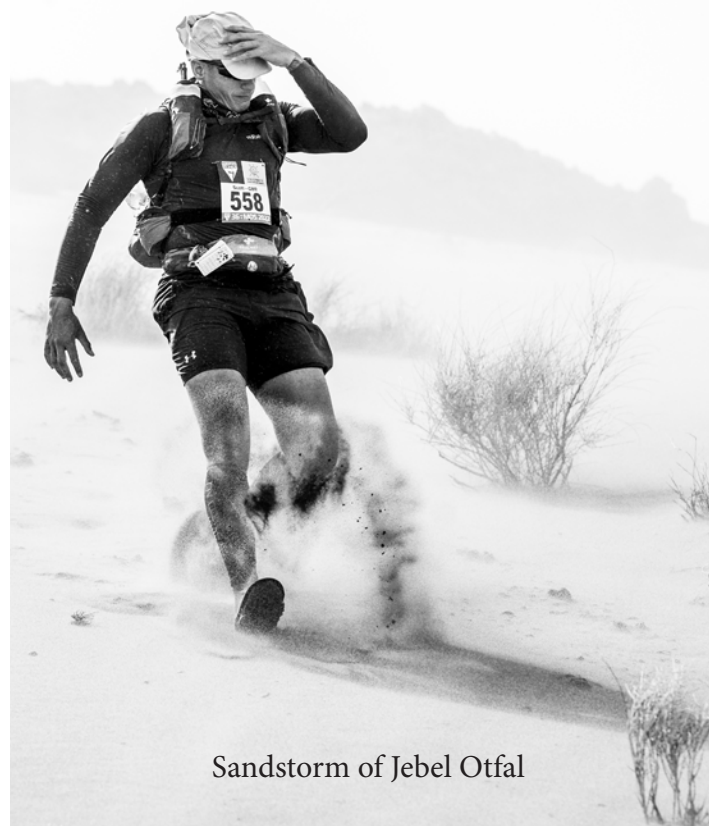
Bivouac





Finally, MDS is a wonderful, magical, moving road show that is difficult to understand and appreciate until you are in the Sahara. A small city moves seamlessly and like clockwork day-by-day, it is mind-blowing; a magical Saharan experience that really is one of the greatest experiences in running.

Stripped back to basics, one tent, 8-people, one bag per person; rationed food, clothing, sleeping bag, sleeping mat, mandatory equipment and rationed water - multi-day experiences come no better. Stripped back from connection and technology, this week in the Sahara really is one of the ultimate raw experiences in this crazy modern and connected world.



Sandstorm of Jebel Otfal

Ian Corless
PHOTOGRAPHER



LIGHTWEIGHT Running Pack

ULTIMATE RUNNING PACK



Hydration Pack

Tanluhu 15L Large Capacity: Its modest volume and 15L large capacity allow you to fill water bag easily..



Lots of Pockets

Consists of main water bag pocket, front water bottle pockets and 5.5 inches smartphone pocket, It also equips with exterior pockets, which you can store vacuum cup, keys, cash, etc.



Fits Nice & Snug

Comes with extendable waist strap and adjustable chest strap, fitting most body sizes. Besides, it can fit your back closely, getting rid of rocking.



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Egg & Turkey Stuffed Peppers

Serves 4

- 4 eggs
- 4 egg whites
- 2 tbsp. almond milk
- 1 tsp. coconut oil
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 1 lb. (450g) lean ground turkey
- 2 tsp. oregano
- 1 tsp. cumin
- 2 cups (60g) spinach, chopped
- 4 red medium bell peppers
- ½ cup (50g) cheese (dairy or plant-based)
- parsley, chopped to serve

What you need to do

1. Heat oven to 400°F (200°C).
2. Beat the eggs, egg whites and milk, then set aside.
3. Heat the coconut oil in a pan over medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 3 minutes until softened and browned.
4. Add in the turkey, oregano and cumin, season with salt and pepper. Cook until meat is cooked through, about 5 minutes. Then add the spinach, and mix until it wilts about 2 minutes.
5. Increase the heat and add in the eggs. Pull the eggs across the skillet with a spatula. Repeat for about 3 minutes until eggs are cooked. Then set aside.
6. Cut the peppers horizontally and remove the seeds, then stuff with the scrambled eggs and turkey.
7. Place the peppers in a baking dish and sprinkle them with grated cheese.
8. Bake in the oven for 15 minutes, until cheese has melted and the edges have browned.
9. To serve, sprinkle with chopped parsley.

GF	LC	MP	HP	D	N
Prep	Cook	Kcal	Fats(g)	Carbs(g)	Protein(g)
5 mins	20 mins	329	12	11	43

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Chicken, Orange & Walnut Salad

Serves 2

- For the dressing:**
- 3 tbsp. of honey
 - 2 tbsp. mustard
 - 1 tbsp. olive oil
 - 1 tbsp. lemon juice
 - 2 tbsp. orange juice
 - ¼ tsp. cinnamon

- For the salad:**
- 7 oz. (200g) chicken breast
 - 4 handfuls rocket
 - ¼ iceberg lettuce
 - 1 orange
 - ½ pomegranate fruit, seeds
 - ¼ cup (30g) pecans, roasted

What you need to do

1. Peel orange and cut out the pulp and set aside. Squeeze the juice from the rest of the orange and keep it for the sauce.
2. Mix the ingredients of the dressing in a cup, season with salt and pepper.
3. Cut the chicken breast into 4 smaller pieces, season with salt, coat with olive oil and place on a hot grill pan — grill for 4 minutes on both sides.
4. Drizzle the chicken pieces with a tbsp. of dressing and continue to grill for about 1.5 minutes on a slightly lower heat. Turn over then drizzle with another tbsp. of dressing, and grill for another minute. Remove from the pan and set aside. Once cooled slightly slice into pieces.
5. Mix the salad leaves and divide it between two plates, then top with the orange and chicken. Sprinkle with the pomegranate seeds and roasted pecans. Drizzle with the remaining dressing and serve.

GF	LC	MP	HP	D	N
Prep	Cook	Kcal	Fats(g)	Carbs(g)	Protein(g)
10 mins	10 mins	458	20	47	28

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Smoked Salmon, Feta & Asparagus Omelet

Serves 2

- 4 oz. (125g) asparagus
- 1 tsp. coconut oil
- 3 large eggs
- 5 tbsp. (70ml) milk, plant or dairy
- 2 oz. (60g) smoked salmon, cut into pieces
- ¼ cup (30g) feta cheese (or brie, camembert), cubed
- 4-5 cherry tomatoes, halved dill, to serve

What you need to do

1. Wash the asparagus, break off the hard ends the discard (they will break themselves in the right place). Cut the softer stalks diagonally to about ½ cm pieces.
2. Boil in lightly salted water for about 2 minutes, then strain and set aside.
3. In a bowl, whisk eggs with the milk, salt and pepper. Add asparagus, salmon and cubed cheese, mix everything well.
4. Heat the oven to 350°F (180°C). Heat the oil in a pan (diameter of approx. 24cm) over medium heat, and pour in the egg mixture. Rearrange the toppings if necessary. Top with the halved cherry tomatoes (cut end up).
5. Cover the pan with a lid and cook until the mass is set for about 5 minutes. Then place in the oven (without cover), and cook for another 6-10 minutes, until the mass sets.
6. To serve sprinkle with fresh dill and season with freshly ground black pepper.

Pro Tip: The length of time in the oven will depend on the size of pan and thickness of the egg mixture.

GF	LC	MP	HP	D	N
Prep	Cook	Kcal	Fats(g)	Carbs(g)	Protein(g)
10 mins	15 mins	302	21	6	20

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Salmon & Peach Salad

Serves 2

- For the marinade:**
- 2 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
 - 1 tbsp. olive oil
 - 1 tsp. tamari
 - 1 tsp. maple syrup
 - ¼ tsp. ground pepper

- For the salad:**
- 2 salmon filets (5oz./140g each)
 - 1 cob corn, cooked
 - 4 oz. (120g) salad leaves
 - 1 peach, sliced
 - 10 cherry tomatoes, halved
 - 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar

What you need to do

1. Combine the apple cider vinegar, olive oil, tamari, maple syrup and ground pepper to make the marinade. Place the salmon skinless-side down in a flat dish, pour over the marinade. Leave it to sit in the fridge for 20-30 minutes.
2. In the meantime, grill the corn in the oven or on a grill pan, then cool slightly and cut off the kernels, set aside.
3. Next, preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C) and place the salmon on a baking tray. Cook for 8-10 minutes or until it is cooked through.
4. Divide the salad leaves between two bowls, top with the sliced peach, tomatoes and grilled corn. Lastly, top with the salmon, either the whole filet or flaked.
5. To serve, drizzle with balsamic vinegar and season with salt and pepper.

GF	LC	MP	HP	D	N
Prep	Cook	Kcal	Fats(g)	Carbs(g)	Protein(g)
30 mins	15 mins	416	25	21	33

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